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THE AHMADIYYA MOVEMENT IN ISLAM

The Ahmadiyya Movement was founded by Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad of Qadian (1834-1908), the Promised Messiah. The Ahmadiyya Movement seeks to uplift humanity and to establish peace throughout the world through living and preaching Islam. It has its headquarters at Rabwah, Pakistan. The Movement has established Missions in many parts of the world. The following are the addresses of some of them.

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THE INAUGURAL ADDRESS

By

Hazrat Mirza Muzaffar Ahmad

(Delivered at the 27th Annual Convention of the Ahmadiyya Movement in Islam, held at Wheelock College, Boston, Mass., during August 30 - September 1, 1974.)

Dear Sisters and Brothers, Assalamo Alaikum.

As you all know, members of the Ahmadiyya Community during the last three months have been the victims of severe persecution on a large scale. There has been violence resulting in the loss of many valuable innocent lives; there has been looting and arson of property involving losses which run into millions and in the more recent phase the persecution has taken the form of a severe social and economic boycott in many forms which has denied to many even the basic barest human needs. It is most unfortunate that all this is professed to be done in the name of Islam, the very meaning of which is Peace and which enjoins and expects from its adherents tolerance, highest form of morality, and preaches freedom of thought, belief and conscience.

While we should, as taught and practiced by the Holy Prophet, pray for the guidance of the people who indulge in misdeeds and folly, we should also analyze why it is happening and what should be our response. I would confine my comments on two major issues, namely:

- a) Why Ahmadies believe that the Holy Prophet Muhammad (peace and blessings of God be upon him) is *Khatamun Nabiyyeen*, خاتم النبيين and how their interpretation of this varies from the interpretation of others.
- b) What is our belief on *Jihad* جهاد or the Holy War.

Both these issues are at the bottom of the present agitation. For the proper understanding of the issue of *Khatamun Nabiyyeen*, we have to dwell briefly on another issue, namely whether Christ is dead or is alive in his physical person in heaven and will descend on earth again for his second advent. The Ahmadies believe that the Prophet Christ did not die on the Cross, as Jews had intended, but was saved from such a death. He lead his normal life in fulfilment of his Divine mission and died a natural death like any other human being. Non-Ahmadies, on the contrary,

believe - or I should say believed - that God removed him from the Cross to the Heaven with his physical body and after some 1900 years of living in the Heaven, as a normal human being, will send him back to earth to lead back the Muslims to the purity of their faith. We Ahmadies believe that the second advent of Messiah will not be in the physical person of Christ but a messenger and a prophet will arise in the spirit of Christ. I do not wish to dilate on this point at length as this is not directly the subject of my talk. It is enough to note here that both Ahmadies and non-Ahmadies believe in the advent of a Messiah and a prophet, after the Holy Prophet.

Now what exactly are the beliefs of Ahmadies and non-Ahmadies on *Khatamun Nabiyyeen*.

(i) The proud title of *Khatamun Nabiyyeen* is bestowed on the Holy Prophet by Allah in one of the verses of the Quran. Both Ahmadi and non-Ahmadi Muslims believe that the Holy Prophet Muhammad (peace and blessings of God be upon him) was *Khatamun Nabiyyeen*. While the different sects are in total agreement on the Holy Prophet being *Khatamun Nabiyyeen*, the two interpret these words differently.

(ii) The non-Ahmadies interpret the words to mean that the Holy Prophet was the last of the Prophets and there can be no Prophet after him.

(iii) The Ahmadies believe that Prophets are of two different kinds:

- (a) There are Prophets who bring their own teachings or law with them and these are described as the law-bearing Prophets *نبي شری*.
- (b) There are others who bring no new teachings or law but nevertheless enjoy the status of *نبي غیر شری* or non law-bearing Prophets. They have no independent status but are totally subservient to the law-giving Prophets *نبي شری* whom they follow, so that people who slide back into an irreligious state or forget their Creator, can be recharged with the true spirit of the religion. In this way people are equipped to meet fresh needs necessitated by the changed circumstances.

It is in this sense that the Ahmadies believe that whereas there can be no new law-bearing Prophet with an independent law after the Holy Prophet Muhammad (peace be on him), since Islam now provides a perfect religion and a code of conduct; there can be non law-bearing prophets, who, without bringing any new teachings are nevertheless needed for the rejuvenation of people and to rekindle the flame of spiritual life in them.

Thus according to the Ahmadiyya interpretation of *Khatamun Nabiyyeen* there can be no new Prophet who will bring a new religion or

law other than Islam or modify in any slightest degree the teachings of the Holy Prophet Muhammad (peace and blessings of God be on him). In the sense of the last law-giver he was the last of the Prophets. But in total submission to his master, Muhammad, and as his servant there can be Prophets who will be *غیر شری-غیر مستقل-اسی* i.e., non law-giver, non independent and from the followers and *Ummat* of the Holy Prophet. The Promised Messiah claims Prophethood only in that sense, as a humble servant of the Holy Prophet Muhammad (peace and blessings of God be on him) and in no other sense.

(iv) There is a general misconception that a Prophet (پی) can only be one who brings a new religion or law and enjoys that status independently in his own right. This is not true. The correct meaning of *Nabee* (نبی) is one who receives spiritual revelations from Allah which unfold the future events to him and one who is described as such by revelation from Allah.

Thus the Promised Messiah in his recorded talks and statements clarified that the difference between us and the non-Ahmadies arises from a misconception of the word *Nabee* (نبی) and what it stands for. He describes it as a dispute over words (نزاع لفظی) or their interpretation and goes on to say that he does not subscribe to any form of prophethood of Muhammad (peace be on him) which in any way challenges or runs counter to his exalted status as *Khatamun Nabiyyeen*.

(v) If we look at the two interpretations of *Khatamun Nabiyyeen*, the one held by non-Ahmadies is both odd and illogical. This is so because on the one hand they proclaim that there can and will be no prophet after Muhammad (peace be on him) and yet on the other hand they claim that Christ, who is admittedly a Prophet, will come after the Holy Prophet to win back the people to the true spirit of Islam.

The Ahmadiyya interpretation on the other hand is consistent and logical because the second advent of Messiah in which both the Ahmadies and the non-Ahmadies believe does not in any way offend or conflict with their interpretation of *Khatamun Nabiyyeen*, namely, that there can be no new law-giver as Prophet, or one who starts a new religion other than Islam, but that nevertheless there can be reformers, as and when they are needed. (and who can deny that given the present immoral state of the world we need such an exalted reformer more than at any other time) Such a reformer or Prophet will be the servant of the Holy Prophet and will continue to contribute to the fulfilment of his mission which is to last till the doomsday. In other words the dispute between the two sections merely boils down to the issue whether the claim of the founder of the

Ahmadiyya Community as the Promised Messiah is true or not. Both Ahmadies and non Ahmadies believe in the coming of one Messiah (Prophet after the Holy Prophet).

This brings us to the other charge made against the Ahmadies that, God forbid, our interpretation is derogatory to the status of the Holy Prophet. Let me state at the very outset that this is a totally baseless, unfounded and indeed a cruel charge against the Ahmadies.

As I have already stated we believe that the Holy Prophet was *Khatamun Nabiyyeen* and we attach so much importance to this that whereas a non Muslim is converted to Islam and declared to be a Muslim by recitation of the *Kalema* (as that is indeed how a non Muslim is admitted into the fold of Islam even at the hands of a non Ahmadi) the Ahmadies on the other hand insist that if a person wishes to join the community in Islam he must specifically profess that he regards the Holy Prophet Muhammad (peace and blessings of God be on him) as *Khatamun Nabiyyeen*. This is indeed one of the ten proclaimed conditions of *Bai-at* through which one becomes a member of the Ahmadiyya Community. It is a printed document and anyone can have access to it. According to our interpretation the position of the Holy Prophet is so sublime and exalted that his true followers, who in their profound love, devotion and faith lose their own identity and follow the Holy Prophet in total submission and devotion, can indeed rise to the status of a Prophet. In other words the Holy Prophet Muhammad (peace and blessings of God be on him) is a great Prophet, indeed the greatest of all - to such a degree that his true follower and humble servant, like the Promised Messiah founder of the Ahmadiyya Community, can rise to Prophethood and receive this title from Allah because of his devotion and submission to the Holy Prophet. Briefly, the Holy Prophet Muhammad is not only a Prophet himself but a Prophet maker. This is a position not enjoyed or bestowed by Allah to any other prophet. Surely this definition and interpretation acknowledges a most exalted status compared to the mere claim that he was the last of the Prophets. The coming of a prophet or messenger is the greatest reward or favor which can be bestowed on humanity. He beautifies human soul through his teachings, and a living shining example in his person as no other can. It is a pity that our non Ahmadi Muslim brothers seem to hold a belief which denies to them a bounty or reward which is matchless and is essential for spiritual well being.

Let me now read out a few extracts from the writings of the Promised Messiah both in regard to our firm and unshaken belief in the Holy

Prophet being *Khatamun Nabiyyeen* as well as on the exalted status which he enjoys in our beliefs and which indeed is the corner stone of our faith.

1. "I speak with utter truth and call God as my witness that I and my followers are true Muslims and like true Muslims we have full faith and belief in the Holy Prophet and the Quran. We consider that even a tiny deviation from the teachings of Islam is an invitation to destruction and it is part of my religion that through no other way but only through utter obedience and full love of the Holy Prophet can a person now rise and attain spiritual heights and nearness to God. (*Al Hakam, September 17, 1906*)

2. "There is no one worthy of worship but Allah and Muhammad is His Prophet. We believe in God, His angels, His Prophets, His Book, Heaven and Hell and life after death. We have adopted Quran as our Book and the Holy Prophet Muhammad as our Prophet. I make no claim to real Prophethood after the Holy Prophet nor do I accept cancellation of any part of the Holy Book. I bear witness to the fact that Muhammad is *Khatamun Nabiyyeen*, *Khairul Murseleen*, the best of all the Prophets. I bear witness that every truth is contained in the Holy Quran and the sayings of the Holy Prophet and that we are Muslims and God knows well what is in our hearts." (*Anwarul Islam, p.34*)

3. "Our Master, our leader, the greatest of all Prophets is Prophet Muhammad who is *Khatamun Nabiyyeen*. He enjoys the highest spiritual elected position. No one can conceive or get anywhere close to it, leave aside anyone attaining this status." (*Tozih Maram, p.23*)

4. "The gist and essence of our religion is لا اله الا الله محمد رسول الله. The belief which we possess in this life and with which through God's Mercy we will depart from here is that our Master and Guide, Muhammad (peace and blessings of God be upon him) is *Khatamun Nabiyyeen*, *Khairul Murseleen*. Religion reached its glory and perfection through the Prophet Muhammad and serves as a guiding star to those who seek communion with the Creator. With steadfast belief we have full faith that the Holy Quran is the last and final heavenly book and not one iota from its contents, commands and teachings can be changed or modified. And we similarly hold the firm belief and faith that no new revelation from God can alter, rescind, change or in any way modify any of the Quranic teachings. If any one holds views contrary to what I have described above then in my judgment such a person cannot be counted among the faithful

- nay such a person is to be treated as a disbeliever and infidel."

(*Izala-i-Auham*, part I, p.137-138)

5. "Only those can join Ahmadiyya Movement who believe in Islam, who follow the Quran and who follow the teachings and practices of the Holy Prophet." (*Mowahibur Rahman*, p.96-97)

6. "We know it for sure that God's greatest Prophet and the most loved one of God is Muhammad (peace and blessings of God be on him). Our soul proclaims and bears witness to this faith that the only true and right religion now is Islam. How sublime is the status of the great Prophet Muhammad (peace and blessings of God be on him) whose prophethood bears fresh fruit and provides perpetual guidance to its true followers." (*Kitabul Bariyya*, p.155-156)

7. "Our belief is embodied in the five pillars (الركن) of Islamic faith, (*Kalima*, *Namaz*, *Zakat*, *Fasting*, *Hajj*) There is none worthy of worship but Allah and Hazrat Muhammad Mustafa is His Prophet and *Khatamul Ambia*. It is also our belief that anyone who subtracts or adds anything to the *Shariat* of Islam, such a person is without faith and is outside the pale of Islam. We admonish all members of our Community that they owe true allegiance to *Kalima Twiyaba*, namely, *La Ilaha Illaho Muhammadar Rasoolullahe*. They should adhere to this faith unto their death..... We call on heavens and earth to bear witness that this alone is our faith." (*Ayyamus Sulha*, p.86)

8. "O ye people who live on this earth and all ye human souls who reside in the east or the west, listen to me as I call you with all the strength at my command, that today on this earth the only true religion left is Islam and the true God is the one God described in the Holy Quran; and the one Prophet who enjoys perpetual Divine heavenly life and who is entitled to sit in glory on the throne of all piety and righteousness is Prophet Muhammad." (*Taryaqu'l Quloob*, p.11)

These quotations from the writings of the Promised Messiah establish beyond any shadow of a doubt that the Ahmadies firmly believe that Muhammad (peace and blessings of God be on him) is *Khatamun Nabiyyeen*, the best and the greatest of all prophets and the Promised Messiah presents himself as the humblest disciple and servant of the Holy Prophet. He makes no independent claim, deviates not an inch from the teachings of the Holy Prophet, the Quran, the Hadith, or the five basic pillars of Islam. In one of his Persian verses, recalling the cruel title of infidel which the ulema of his time gave him, he stated:

بعد از خدا بعشق محمد محترم گرایم کفر بود بخدا سخت کافریم

(After the love of Allah, I am intoxicated with the love of Prophet Muhammad. If these make a person infidel, then I swear by God that I am indeed a great infidel.)

Before I conclude this portion of my address I would add that the interpretation of *Khatamun Nabiyyeen* by Ahmadies is no different from that of many Muslim divines and scholars throughout the history of Islam.

This is also supported by the sayings of the Holy Prophet and the Hadith.

Thus talking about his own son Ibrahim who died at a young age, the Holy Prophet observed that if he had lived he would have been a prophet. Now how could he say this if his interpretation of *Khatamun Nabiyyeen* was that he was going to be the last of the Prophets.

Again there is the Hadith attributed to the wife of the Holy Prophet, Hazrat Aisha, who advised the Muslims to describe the Holy Prophet as *Khatamun Nabiyyeen* but not to say there will be no prophet after him.

Let me now turn to the other issue which like the issue of *Khatamun Nabiyyeen* has been the center of agitation and here also our teachings on the subject are totally misrepresented.

The accusation against the Ahmadies is that we do not believe in *Jehad* or the Holy war and have cancelled what is claimed to be one of the essential articles of Islamic faith.

This is in fact not true. Ahmadies do believe in *Jehad* but *Jehad* can take different forms in different circumstances.

The non Ahmadies claim that it is incumbent on all Muslims to wage war against the infidels and non believers. Ahmadies, on the other hand, claim that the use of force or the waging of war is permitted only when and where Muslims are prevented by force to practice their faith or when war is waged against them.

This view by the Ahmadies is held on the basis of correct Islamic teachings. Let me list a few of them here.

- i) One of the basic philosophies of Islam is contained in the Quranic verse لا اکراه فی الدین which means that in the matter of faith the use of force or compulsion is not permissible. If this is so then how can Islam require its followers to wage war against non Muslims without any provocation or the use of force on the part of non Muslims to prevent Muslims from practicing their religion.
- ii) Again there is the Quranic verse:

رَبِّ سَاءَ رَبِّكَ الْأَرْضُ بِسْمِ الْأَرْضِ كُلِّهِمْ جَبْعًا أَذَاتُ نَكْوَهَ الْغَاثِ حَتَّى كُونُوا مَوَسِينِ (10: 10)

Freely translated it means that if, in the matter of faith, God had decided to impose His will then all the people living on the earth would have adopted the faith of His choice. (When God, possessing all the absolute power and authority, does not do so) then will you force people to accept any particular view of faith.

In other words this verse clarifies Islamic teachings on freedom of conscience and the freedom given to man to choose his faith. Despite all His power and might, God does not exercise His power and authority to impose any faith on any person and the obvious lesson or message to the Muslim is that when you get into a position of imposing your will on others in the matter of faith you should not exercise this power in the same way as God does not. This is because the system of choice of faith is left to an individual's own inclination and decision. This verse not only throws light on the issue of *Jehad* but incidentally exposes the folly of the demand which is being made by some in Pakistan and *clearly* establishes this to be contrary to the teachings of Islam.

iii) This teaching or interpretation of Ahmadies is also rational because use of force in the matter of faith cannot produce true followers or devotees for any religion. It can only produce hypocrites who under the threat of force profess what they in fact do not believe.

iv) In any case what merit or reward can any profession of faith bestow on any individual where its adoption was brought about by force and not through study and exercise of free will or choice?

v) Again many Christian scholars have made the unjust accusation that Islam was spread through the use of force. This is of course not true and Allah ordained that during the period of the Promised Messiah conditions should exist which will not necessitate the use of force by Muslim against non Muslim so that once again it is proved that the attraction of Islam and its teachings can claim converts through its beauty and excellence and is not in any way dependent on the use of force to win people to its fold.

vi) If indeed *Jehad* was incumbent on Muslims under all circumstances, whether or not any force was used against Muslims in the matter of faith, then surely God would have equipped them to wage this type of struggle against non Muslims. This is not the case. Indeed all this weaponry of force and sophisticated instruments of destruction have been put in the hands of adversaries of Islam.

The battle today, in the field of faith and religion is to be waged

through pen and not through the sword. It is a battle of reason and arguments and not the occasion to use force.

And it is this right type of *Jehad* required in the conditions of these times which the Ahmadies have waged and in which they have excelled. In terms of world population, a handful of people bereft of all worldly riches and means have mounted an effort which has no parallel in modern times. The non-Ahmadi Muslims who number nearly 500 million, with all the wealth, power and means at their disposal, have not been able to make even a hundredth of the effort made for the propagation of Islam throughout the world.

Briefly, whereas non Ahmadies have made little effort to wage the *Jehad* which they believe in, the Ahmadi Muslims have excelled in the type of *Jehad* which the conditions require and demand.

Ahmadies have not rescinded any teachings of Islam on *Jehad*. All they say is that the conditions for a *Jehad* of the type which requires the use of force are non existent today and in the absence of the conditions which permit the use of force the occasion to wage struggle by force or do *Jehad* in this form does not exist.

Here the question arises that if the teachings of Ahmadiyyat are so unambiguous and clear then why this large scale opposition and animosity towards the community.

First of all, it is universally true that every prophet has faced the severest opposition and animosity in the fulfillment of his mission. Truth and not falsehood invite opposition. This happens for a variety of reasons, some of which I will briefly describe below.

i) First, the advent of a Prophet or Reformer takes place only when people have drifted from the right path and have either abandoned the true teachings or had distorted them. If this was not so, there would have been no need of a reformer from Allah. So opposition to his mission is inherent in this situation and in the circumstances in which he proclaims his mission.

ii) Secondly, this opposition is necessary for the spiritual advancement, training and revitalization of the members of the community and those who flocked around a prophet, Prophet's opposition invites signs of Allah which help to fortify the faith of the people.

iii) As a Prophet, through his right teachings, begins to establish a new order, the vested interests and the so-called Ulama of the time perceive a threat to their position and hold on to the society and fight for their own survival.

iv) As under the unalterable Divine Law, the followers of a Prophet gain success after success. This excites jealousy of non believers and further excites their wrath.

v) Lastly a large section of the society oppose because of ignorance of the teachings. Few take the trouble of studying the original teachings of a Prophet and allow themselves to be misguided and misled by others.

And now I come to the concluding section of my address, namely, what should be our response to the situation.

i) First of all we should extend our propagation activities so that the true teachings and views of Ahmadiyyat, and not false ones attributed to it, reach the ever growing number of people. This is more necessary at a time like this when such deep interest has been aroused in Ahmadiyyat.

ii) We should establish by our own example that by becoming Ahmadies we have distinctly improved our character and conduct in every sphere of human life and relationship - in the way we perform our duties, treat our neighbor, care for poor or those in need, in short meet our obligation to God and man. Our supreme conduct and example should be the living propagation of our faith.

iii) More specifically every one of us should undertake to bring one additional person or family every year into the fold of the community so that at the close of every year we go on doubling our number.

iv) We should also organize ourselves in a manner that the economic welfare of the members of our community is assured so that each one of us is gainfully employed and becomes a source of strength to the community. Thus for instance the Ahmadiyya missions in U.S. should in addition to improving the financial position of its members here may also plan to invite Ahmadies from different areas to give them a higher technical education in the states.

v) And above all, we should pray to Allah - not mechanically but persistently and with deep feeling and faith and trust in Allah. We are no doubt weak and helpless but our Allah is all powerful and commands every power and authority on everything. We should seek His guidance and succor in all our difficulties and trials. The present difficulties are bound to disappear because Allah has ordained that the believers and followers of His messengers shall in the end always triumph over their adversaries. This is an unalterable law which can have no exception. The only important thing is that we mould our lives so that we become the instruments of God's will and design, so that our failure becomes synonymous with the failure of Divine mission; and this can never happen.

THE ISLAMIC VIEW ON CONVERSION BY FORCE
A Historical Perspective

By

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Almost twenty years ago, James A. Michener, the world renowned author, wrote an article for *The Reader's Digest* (May, 1955) on Islam. He described it as "one of the strangest facts" that Islam, which in many ways is "almost identical with Christianity and Judaism, should be so poorly understood in America and Europe." He called it as "the Misunderstood Religion."

Today, unfortunately, it is still a very misunderstood faith.

Michener illustrated his point by giving the example of a distinguished Muslim visitor to New York who was told that his prophet, Muhammad, offered the only alternative of death to those who did not agree to accept Islam.

Today, it is tragic that such distortions of the teachings of Islam still prevail. It is even more tragic that quite often such gross misrepresentations are committed in such publications as the textbooks for school children whose tender and impressionable minds are obviously susceptible to form life long images, however erroneous and unfortunate.

A case in point is a history textbook currently adopted in the Canadian high schools, and possibly some American high schools as well. This book is entitled "*The Foundation of the West*" by D. Fishwick, B. Wilkinson, and J. C. Carins, of the University of Toronto. In its chapter on *The Moslem Empire*, it reproduces a miniature painting with the following commentary:

"Muhammad besieging a fortress suggests that Islam was a religion that expanded by the sword. When Muhammad found it difficult to finance his government in Medina, he decided to punish the people of Mecca for not believing in him (and incidentally to raise money) by raiding their caravans until they were ready to make peace and accept him as the prophet of Allah."

One need not assume that the authors are necessarily guilty of malice. However, we are justified to expect that books of such far reaching and profound impact upon the minds of millions be written after adequate and thorough research based on the primary sources such as the scriptures of Islam, the Quran. To embrace secondary and obviously biased information does not do justice to the peaceful teachings of this faith. It certainly casts a reflection on the intellectual integrity of the authors.

Nowhere is there any reference in the Holy Quran which may even remotely imply that Islam encourages, or even permits the use of force to convert anybody to the faith. Unequivocally, it declares, "*There should be no compulsion in the matter of faith,*" (2:257).

It clearly teaches that:

‘Proclaim, it is the truth from your Lord; wherefore let him who will believe and let him who will, disbelieve.’ (18:30)

The Quran explains that it is within the competence of God alone to make a person believe, but He does not force anybody to believe.

There are abundant and extensive references in the scriptures of Islam which repeatedly guarantee this basic freedom of religion to believers and non-believers alike. Of course, under certain circumstances, Islam does permit a war in self-defense – but never a *pre-emptive* war. Even in the defensive action, the followers have been warned against transgression. (2:190)

Furthermore, it enjoins that once the aggression ceases, no retaliation is permissible except against the aggressors. (2:194) The Quran commanded the Muslims:

‘Let not a people’s enmity towards you incite you to act contrary to justice; be always just; that is closes to righteousness.’ (5:9)

It is true that when the believers are called upon to fight in defense, it was considered a sacred duty and *striving in the cause of God* for one to discharge one’s obligations. But at no place was there even a hint of the use of force to bring the non-believers to the fold of Islam. “Call unto the way of the Lord with wisdom and goodly exhortation,” says the Holy Quran, “and reason with them on the basis of that which is best.” (16:126)

It is inconceivable that Islam would have endorsed the use of sword to convert when it did not encourage the use of even harsh language in their endeavor. To quote the Quran:

“Reville ye not those whom they call beside God, lest they, out

of spite, should revile God in their ignorance. Thus have We caused their conduct to seem fair to every people." (6:109)

The most effective means towards the spread of any faith, in any case, is neither the force nor empty, hollow words. It can only be one's own righteous example. As the Quran says:

"Who speaks better than one who invites people to God and acts righteously ... None attains to this save those who are steadfast and none attains to this save those who are granted a large share of good." (41:34-36)

The life of Prophet Muhammad truly and perfectly reflects the spirit of these teachings. History records that when the Prophet and his followers, after suffering thirteen long years of unprecedented persecution in Mecca, finally migrated to Medina, then it was the Meccan non-believers who continued to come over and over again, to attack Medina with progressively larger armies. Not once did the Prophet go to Mecca to attack them except in the last year of his life when, of course, there was no fighting. The non-believers realized that they could not eliminate Muhammad and asked for peace. The Prophet did not impose any kind of punishment upon his adversaries. He forgave them for their past magnanimously and not a drop of blood was shed in fighting. Had there been any such orthodox rendering of the Quranic injunctions as to use force to bring them to the fold of Islam, history would have recorded that the Muslims, and not the non-Muslims, took the initiative every year in leaving Medina to attack Mecca. The historical accounts are completely opposite.

It is true that some Western critics of Islam allege that although the Prophet himself did not make use of force in the propagation of Islam, nor did he lead any aggressive wars, yet his followers practiced militarism in Islam's first century. However, one such writer who usually criticizes Islam very harshly, Sir William Muir, says that the wars of the first Islamic century were widened and prolonged after the Byzantine and Persian emperors started to give active support to dissidents within Arabia.

Coming down to the Islamic history, there are at least two extremely outstanding episodes which are vitally relevant to this discussion. Firstly, crossing the Arabian peninsula and the entire coast of North Africa, the Muslims reached Spain within a century after the death of Muhammad. They ruled the Iberian Peninsula for several hundred years. Had they used force during the centuries of their rule to convert their subjects to their faith, could they have remained such a small minority that they could be

so completely eliminated at the end of their rule?

The Islamic period in the Indian subcontinent, too, extended over several centuries. Yet the Muslims always remained a minority around Delhi, the center of their power, when they were in a position to use force for conversion. Their numbers seem to have rapidly increased in the northeast of the subcontinent (presently Bangladesh) and the northwest (today's Pakistan), the areas where their power was much weaker. Again if the use of force towards conversion had been supported by the Quran, the situation in these areas could have taken an entirely different turn.

Why have so many Western writers, very often quite unwittingly, fallen in embracing the second-hand, distorted and inaccurate image of a faith so close to Judaism and Christianity? For an answer, one has to look back to the long, bitter and rather violent centuries of the Crusades in the history of Europe. As Dr. Edwin E. Calverly of Hartford Seminary Foundation wrote:

"But for us to understand the Crusades we should think of them not as wars to spread the Christian religion among non-Christian peoples and to win converts by force of arms; rather they were to conquer lands ruled by Muslims and to establish Christian rulers in their place.

To secure support for such political and military objectives the propaganda used religious motives. Nothing too harsh or too false could be said to excite hostility against the Muslims, both when the armies and the funds were collected and when the crusaders reached Western Asia. The centuries of the Crusaders are the most shameful and the most disastrous in the history of Christianity. The half of a millennium that has since elapsed has not removed the dishonor or the distrust that the Crusaders left behind in the Orient.

The false information poured out for several centuries to all people of Europe who supplied the men and the means for the Crusades, and the false reports brought back by those who returned from the wars filled the West with popular misinformation about Islam that Western mass education has not yet been able to remove.

One need only to examine the early vernacular literatures of Europe from Italy to England to find innumerable instances of inaccurate statements about Muslim beliefs and customs in general and about Muhammad in particular. Muslims may still justly

object to statements repeatedly made in our daily newspapers and monthly magazines, our church weeklies and even our missionary addresses, our stories and novels and even our textbooks. This is the heritage in the West of the Crusade propaganda." (*Near Eastern Culture and Society*, Edited by T. Cuyler Young, Princeton University Press, 1951. pp.102-103)

It is because of this unhappy past that James Michener calls Islam "the most misunderstood religion in the West."

The Canadian history textbook under review has made several additional errors in its account of *The Moslem Empire*. We have confined ourselves to only the topic of conversion to Islam by force in this discussion. We sincerely hope that the future historians will be more meticulous in the use of their sources in writing books which influence and shape the thoughts and views of the coming generations.

THE VICTORY OF ISLAM AND THE PROMISED MESSIAH

By

Imam M. S. Shahid, Missionary Incharge, North America

(Speech delivered at the 27th Annual Convention of the Ahmadiyya Movement in Islam, held at Wheelock College, Boston, Mass., during August 30 - September 1, 1974.)

The year 1889 will ever be considered a turning point in the history of Islam. It was the year when Hazrat Ahmad the Holy Founder of the Ahmadiyya Movement in Islam announced that he was the Promised Messiah and Mahdi whose advent was foretold by both Jesus Christ and the Holy Prophet Muhammad (may peace and blessings of Allah be upon him)

The sole mission of Hazrat Ahmad's advent was to revive and re-establish Islam and re-seat the Holy Prophet Muhammad (peace and blessings of Allah be on him) on the highest pedestal of glory which is his due.

Islam, of course, is a religion of peace and stands to establish peace in the world so that mankind may live in peace and harmony. It is a religion which is complete and comprehensive. It teaches equality among people, justice and fair play. But it is deplorable to say that the same religion which possesses such high qualities had become the target of foul attacks from all sides, unfortunately even including some of the so-called Muslims. This is because Muslims for the past few centuries had fallen short of their goals and had been following the road to materialism and anti-Islamic traditions and customs.

In such a crucial and critical period for Muslims, God came to the help of Islam once again as He had already given promise to the Muslims that in the latter days when there would remain nothing of the Quran but its words and nothing of Islam but its name, the Holy Prophet's second advent will take place (and there are others from among them who have not yet joined them) and that was to be in the person of the Promised Messiah. Thus according to this promise God raised Hazrat Ahmad, the Holy Founder of the Ahmadiyya Movement, to defend Islam against the onslaught of its opponents and preach and propagate Islam through arguments and Heavenly signs. He came to illuminate the hearts of men with the light of the Holy Quran and to rekindle in the hearts of Muslims

the love for their religion and their moral obligations towards it

Addressing the people, the Promised Messiah said:

“Listen O earth and bear witness O heaven, that I have received the inspiration from on high and have found access to the Divine mysteries. I have been sent in the early part of this century in order that I may restore Islam to its original purity, and as a judge, remove the differences that are tearing assunder the Muslim sects and arm them with the weapons of heavenly signs, to destroy all false principles and bring about a spiritual transformation in the whole world.”

This is an age, according to the prophecies, when God wants to establish the supremacy of Islam over all other religions. God says in the Holy Quran:

“He it is Who has sent His Messenger with the guidance and the religion of truth that He may cause it to prevail over all religions even if those who associate partners with God hate it. (61-10)

Most of the commentators of the Holy Quran are agreed that this verse applies to the Promised Messiah in whose time all the religions were to make their appearance and the superiority of Islam over all of them was to be established.

The Promised Messiah, while explaining the purpose of his advent, says:

“It is the will and desire of God that all those living in different settlements and various lands, in Europe or Asia; all those who possess a righteous nature, He should draw them all to the doctrine of Unity, and gather all His creatures on one single religion. This is the aim of God for the fulfilment of which I have been sent.”

The noble task of regeneration and reformation of the whole world, according to the prophecy of the Holy Quran, has now been entrusted to the members of the Ahmadiyya Movement through the Promised Messiah. This is of course a trust which they must fulfil, generation after generation, till the entire world is brought back to the path of virtue.

Every Ahmadi brother and sister, therefore, should rise to the occasion and redouble his or her efforts for the revival of Islam which calls for supreme sacrifices, as says the Promised Messiah:

“Truth will prevail. A new bright day will dawn for Islam. The sun of Islam will rise in full bloom, same as it did before. But this will not be at once. Imperative it is that this should not happen until

we have proved our worth by devoted hard work, by offering our life-blood, by sacrificing our rest and peace, by accepting all indignities for the dignity of Islam. The new life of Islam demands a great sacrifice from us. What is that sacrifice? It is our lives. On this, sacrifice depends now the life of Islam, the life of Muslims, the manifestation of God in our times. Sacrifice is the essence of Islam and this is the Islam that God wants to restore." (Victory of Islam)

The Promised Messiah further says:

"God has repeatedly informed me that He will grant me great dignity and will put my love in the hearts. He will cause my movement to spread in the world and will make my sect dominate all other sects. The adherents of my sect will so perfectly excel in knowledge and conviction that they will silence all others with the light of their truth, with their arguments and with their signs, and every nation will drink water from this spring.

And this movement will grow and prosper till it encompasses the whole world. Many obstacles will arise and trials will come, but God shall remove these from their midst and shall fulfil His promise so ye who listen! remember these things and keep safe these prophecies in your boxes for this is the word of God that will be fulfilled one day." (Tajalliyate Ilahiya)

And again:

"Listen ye all peoples for it is the prophecy of Him who created the heavens and the earth. He shall spread this Jamaat of His in all the countries and shall grant it predominance over all others through reasons and arguments.

The days are coming, nay they are very near, when there shall remain only one faith worthy to be mentioned with respect. God shall bless this faith and this movement in an extraordinary manner. And whoso thinks of destroying it shall be disappointed. And this triumph shall last for ever till the crack of Doom. If now they mock at me what harm can it do? Because there has never been a prophet who was not mocked at. So it is necessary that the Promised Messiah should also be mocked at, as God has said, 'Alas for My servants! there comes not a messenger to them but they mock at him.' So this is a sign from God that every prophet is mocked at. But who will mock at one who descends from heaven in the company of angels in front of all the peoples? From this

argument a wise person can understand that to think that Jesus will descend from heaven is a false notion. Remember, no one will descend from heaven. All our opponents who are living at present will die and not one of them will see Jesus, son of Mary, descend from the sky. Their children who survive them will also pass away and none of them will see Jesus, son of Mary, descending from heaven. Generations of their posterity will also perish and they too will not see the son of Mary descending from heaven. Then God will create restlessness in their hearts that the day of the glory of the cross had passed away and the world had taken another turn, but Jesus, son of Mary, had still not come down from the sky. Then all the wise people will discard this belief and the third century from today will not have completed until all those who had been waiting for Jesus, both Muslims and Christians, will despair of his coming and, entertaining misgivings, shall give up their belief and there will be only one Faith in the world and one preceptor. I came only to sow the seed. This seed has been sown by my hands. It will now grow and blossom forth and none dare retard its growth." (*Tazkaratush-Shahadatain*).

The Promised Messiah has given glad tidings to the Jamaat that a time will come when kings and the heads of state will enter the fold of Ahmadiyyat. God, addressing the Promised Messiah, said:

'God shall spread your blessings all around. An abandoned house He shall inhabit by you; and shall fill with blessings a house full of horrors. Your progeny will never be cut off but shall ever be green till the last days. God shall establish your name with honor till the last day when the world will end; and He will spread your message to the corners of the world. I shall raise you and shall call you to Myself. Your home shall never be erased from the face of the earth. And it will happen so that all those who think of insulting you and intend to fail you and are out to destroy you, they themselves shall fail and shall die in failure and frustration. But your God shall make you wholly successful and shall grant you all your wishes. I shall increase the party of your sincere and devoted friends and shall bless their lives and properties and shall make them grow and prosper. And they shall dominate the other party of Muslims, the party of enemies and envious, till the last day. God shall not forget them and shall never ignore them and they shall get their reward that they deserve on the basis of their

sincerity. You are to Me like the prophets of the sons of Israel.. You are to me like My Unity. You are mine and I am yours. The time will come, no it is very near, when God shall put your love in the hearts of kings and chiefs so that they shall seek blessings from your clothes."

And again:

"I saw in a vision a party of sincere believers, and of just and pious kings. Some of them were from this country, some of them were from Arabia and some from Persia. Some of them were from Syria and Rome and some were from countries I do not know about. Then I was told by Allah that 'they shall accept you and shall believe in you and shall bless you and pray for you. And I shall grant you blessings so that *they shall seek blessings from your clothes*. I shall enter them among your sincere followers.' This is what I have seen in a vision and this is what has come to me from the All-Knowing Allah."

The Promised Messiah has mentioned that the people of Arabia will accept him and join the folds of Ahmadiyyat. He says:

Allah the Almighty has informed me:

"The righteous of Arabia and the saints of Syria bless you. The heavens and the earth bless you and Allah praises you from His throne. I see that the people of Mecca are entering in great numbers the party of Allah, the All Powerful, the Almighty. This is from the Lord of heavens and the earth and is strange in the eyes of the people of this earth."

About the Western nations entering in Islam the Promised Messiah says:

"Surely we believe in the rising of the sun from the West. But it has been made clear to me in a vision that rising of the sun from the West means that Western countries, which are from ancient days groping in the darkness of unbelief and error, shall be lightened by the Sun of Truth.

In these words the Promised Messiah has made reference to a saying of the Holy Prophet, that in the time of the Promised Messiah's advent, the sun will rise from the West.

The Promised Messiah has also said that:

"I see my followers in the land of Russia like grains of sand."

About the final victory of Islam the Promised Messiah was so sure that he said:

"I have been informed that Islam shall win this combat in the end. I am not talking of earthly things, for I am no earthly man. I say only that which God has put into my mouth. The earthly men would think that perhaps in the end Christianity may prevail in the world or Buddhism may dominate the whole world. But they are mistaken in thinking this. It should be remembered that nothing happens on this earth unless it is decided in the heavens. The God of heavens has told me that in the end the religion of Islam shall win the hearts."

He says again:

"There will be a new heaven and a new earth. The days are near when the sun of truth shall rise in the West and Europe shall come to know the true God. Thereafter the door of repentance shall close; for those who desired to enter will have entered with eagerness. Only those will remain outside whose hearts are sealed by nature, who love not light but darkness. All faiths shall perish except Islam and all weapons shall break except the heavenly weapons of Islam which shall neither break nor be blunted until it smashes the forces of darkness into bits. The time is close at hand when the pure Unity of God, that even dwellers of deserts ignorant of all faiths feel in their hearts, will spread throughout. On that day no false redemption or false god shall survive. One blow of the Divine hand will nullify all machinations of disbelief, but not with the sword or the gun but by means of enlightening a number of souls with Divine light and by imbuing pious hearts with Divine effulgence. Only then will you understand what I say."

It is God's Will that those who believe in the Messengers and Prophets of Allah are put to test. They face difficulties and hardships but always surmount these obstacles. God says in the Holy Quran:

"Do men think that they will be left alone because they say, 'we believe', and they will not be tried." (29:3)

Again God says:

"Do you think that you will enter Heaven while there has not come over you the condition of those who passed away before you, poverty and affliction befell them and they were violently shaken until the Messenger and those who believed along with him said: When will come the help of Allah? Yea, surely the help of Allah is near." (2:215)

Believers must be prepared for persecution of all sorts. But it does not mean that the persecutions are for their annihilation and destruction. Rather, they are just to give them the necessary strength of conviction and firmness of determination. God says in the Holy Quran:

“And seek the help of Allah with patience and prayer.”

Patience and prayer draw near the compassion and mercy of Allah and all the difficulties vanish. The Promised Messiah has drawn our attention towards this fact in these words:

“Do not think that God will let you perish. You are the seed sown by the hand of God in this earth. God says this seed shall grow and bear fruit, throw out shoots in all directions, becoming a big tree. Blessed are they who are not afraid of the difficulties they might have to face in between, for tribulations along this path are indeed necessary so that you should be well tested as to who among you is true in his profession of faith and who is false. Whoever is shaken by tribulations and falters, he in no way injures God or His cause and his evil luck shall take him to hell. Indeed it would have been for the better for him if he had not been born at all.

But all those who wait patiently till the end, though distress descends on them which shall shake them very badly, storm after storm of troubles blow on them one after another, until people begin to laugh at them with scorn and the world treat them with contempt, in the end they shall triumph and the doors of blessings shall be opened upon them.” (The-Will)

The crisis through which our Jamaat is passing presently need not worry us. We shall eventually emerge victorious, Allah willing, to create a world that shall glorify the name of God till the end of the days.

Referring to this situation, Hazrat Musleh Mauood, the Khalifatul Masih II (may God be pleased with him) said while addressing the Annual Gathering held in December, 1951:

We are, no doubt, the object of contempt and derision in the eyes of our opponents, but there is no cause for despair or dejection, for the treatment which is meted out to us by our opponents is the best reward that the believers in heavenly dispensations can possibly get on the face of the earth. We are just like a solitary child who passes through a lane and children of the street tease him, mock at him and try to do him harm; but the mother as soon as she hears the cry of her child, rushes out into the street and comes to her son's rescue. Do you think this is an occasion for the

boy to be dejected? No, as a matter of fact, he would feel proud of the expression of love his mother has shown for him. We are in line with the prophets of God and our opponents have taken the opposite side, so we stand on a firm ground and have every reason to believe that we shall win in the long run."

By the grace of Allah we have been blessed with the institution of Khilafat which provides the shield behind which we fight the battle of Islam and succeed under the benign guidance and inspiration of our Imam. The seed sown by the Promised Messiah is now being watered by his Khalifas and that has already become a huge tree and its branches have spread all over the world and, *Insha Allah*, the victory of Islam will be conspicuously visible to everyone in due course.

Hazrat Musleh Mauood, Khalifatul Masih II (God be pleased with him) while giving the glad tidings of the approaching victory of Islam through Ahmadiyyat, said:

"The period of the success and progress of the Jamaat, by the grace of God, is approaching fast and the day is not very far when men in groups and multitudes shall join the fold of Ahmadiyyat. In various countries overseas, groups after groups shall join us and the time is approaching when the entire villages and towns shall have none else but Ahmadies living in them. Look I am a mere man and the one who shall follow me shall also be a man in whose time this progress and success shall be witnessed. Since he would be only one man he shall not be able to teach and train all those newcomers. You shall be their teachers. Therefore, learn now so that you may be able to teach them. The Lord God has ordained that you shall be the teachers and professors of the world. It is, therefore, of the utmost importance that you should learn so that you may be able to teach them who shall join the fold."
(Anwar-i-Khilafat)

The Khalifatul Masih II had predicted that in the time of the third Khalifa, there will rise against Ahmadiyyat a violent storm of opposition, but God will steer the ship of the Jamaat clear and crush all forces that may be arrayed against the Movement. How very forceful and prophetic was he when he declared:

"Whenever the election of the next Khalifa takes place and whosoever is duly elected, I wish to give him glad tidings that God shall favor him with support and whosoever opposes him, may he be a great man or small, shall face humiliation and ignominy and is

bound to accost ruin and disgrace; because the next Khalifa shall indeed walk in the footsteps of the Holy Prophet and in the footsteps of the Promised Messiah, and shall uphold and establish the institution of the Islamic Khilafat. Therefore, I give glad tidings to him now who shall be elected the third successor in my place, that even if the governments of this world oppose him those shall be shattered into pieces." (Khilafat-i-Haqqa Islamia, pp. 17-18).

Let me now quote the words of Hazrat Khalifatul Masih III, about whose time the reference has been made in the above two quotations from the address of the Khalifatul Masih II with regard to the final and lasting victory of Islam in which we have complete and perfect faith. He says:

"The nation which becomes the recipient of the unlimited grace of God shall, naturally, have to shoulder innumerable responsibilities. I have a very strong feeling and which fact has been strongly infused into my heart that the next 23 to 25 years are very important years for Ahmadiyyat. You must have seen yesterday's paper (Alfazl). The second Khalifa had, in the year 1945, declared that the next 20 years constitute the birth time of Ahmadiyyat. Therefore be wary and remain alert because it very often happens that owing to carelessness the baby is stillborn. But I am glad and wish to give you the glad tidings that the promised child was safely born in 1965, exactly as was predicted by the second Khalifa. I find a very strong conviction in my heart that there has been a healthy natural birth in the year 1965. From 1965 onwards, a new phase has now commenced. This is the phase for offering sincere and whole hearted sacrifices very willingly and cheerfully to gain success and progress. A radical change is destined to appear in this world. Either the world shall be destroyed and totally ruined or it shall have to acknowledge and bow down to its Creator. It is only God who knows the real truth. My duty is but to warn which I have been doing. You must also do the same and join me in prayers so that the peoples of the world may acknowledge their Lord and Creator and thus save the world from total destruction." (Alfazal, July 15, 1970)

I end my speech by giving a quotation from the address of Hazrat Khalifatul Masih in the Majlis-i-Shura held at Rabwah on March 29-31, 1974. It will give us the insight into the present opposition in Pakistan and the prospects of our success..

Addressing the representatives, Hazoor said that the opposition had assumed a different shape. It had become like the confrontation of the Ahzab with Islam in the early days. But it had to be remembered that the battle of Ahzab was the last battle in the sense that it really broke the back of the enemy. The promise that God had given to Muslims on that occasion is also meant for us. The battle between truth and falsehood has entered in the last phase and the next 15 years would be of great importance. Hazoor expressed his sorrow at the fact that the dollar earned through petrol was now being used against the Jamaat but those who are doing that must realise and never forget this fact that the dollar donated by a sincere heart for the service of Islam could not be matched by the dollar of petrol. The former is more valuable and forceful than the latter.

In the end Hazoor assured the Jamaat that whatever the trials and tribulations, the victory will be in favor of Islam and the Jamaat will *certainly achieve the objective for which it is raised.* (*Tahrik-i-Jadid*, April, 1974).

MUSLIN CONTRIBUTION TO MODERN SCIENCE

By

Muhammad Ahmad Sadiq, Boston, Mass.

(Speech delivered at the 27th Annual Convention of the Ahmadiyya Movement in Islam, held at Wheelock College, Boston, Mass., during August 30 - September 1, 1974.)

The Arabs at the time of the Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of God be on him) were unlettered and uncultured except for excellence in oratory poetry. Yet they reached such heights that Professor Fisher of Ohio State University notes, 'Indeed, for several centuries, Muslim society alone carried the torch of human progress'. It has often been observed that while Charlemagne and his lords in the West were trying to learn to write their names, the Muslims were studying Greek and Persian philosophy."

According to Funk & Wagnalls Encyclopedia, European scholars of the Middle Ages were greatly influenced by Islamic contributions to rationalist philosophy and medicine as well as the natural sciences astronomy, and mathematics, and had Latin translations made of Arabic works. Indeed, between the 9th and 13th centuries Islam was the most productive civilization in the world. The contact of the Crusaders with the rich and vigorous culture of the Middle East introduced many new and stimulating ideas to the West, broadened the intellectual horizon and laid the groundwork for the great revival of learning of the Renaissance. The middle Ages in Europe were characterized by the almost total absence of scientific inquiry and experiment.

Stanley Lane Poole wrote, 'For nearly eight centuries under the Muhammadan rulers, Spain set to all Europe a shining example of a civilized and enlightened state... Art, literature and science prospered as they then prospered nowhere else in Europe. Students flocked from France, Germany and England to drink from the fountain of learning which flowed only in the cities of the Moors. The surgeons and doctors of Andalusia were in the van of science. Women were encouraged to devote themselves to serious study.... Mathematics, astronomy and botony, philosophy and jurisprudence were to be mastered in Spain and Spain

alone. One of the students who flocked to Spain was a certain Sylvester, who later became Pope, incidentally.

Three institutions were characteristic of Muslim science in the Middle Ages, the libraries and translation centers, the hospitals, and the astronomical observatories.

Despite the ravages of time, there are almost a quarter of a million manuscripts of the Muslim civilization in the libraries of the Muslim world, Europe and the U.S. Many of the manuscripts deal with science and are translations of ancient works and original books written by the Muslims. At first religion was taught in the mosques, then schools teaching secular knowledge were attached to the mosques. Then as books accumulated, libraries and academies were built.

There were 400,000 books in the library of Abdur-Rahman III. 400 years later the largest library in England had only 698 books.

During the reign of the Caliph al-Mamun, Muslims translated most of the Aristotle, Plato and almost all the Greek philosophers into Arabic.

In Bagdad under the Abbaside rule, the Greek medical works of Galen, Hippocrates, Paul of Aegura and the materia medica of Diocorides were translated into Arabic. Seven of Galen's books are now lost in the original but are preserved in the Arabic translations. If these books and many others written by the ancient scholars of Greece, Syria, India and Persia had not been translated into Arabic, the west would have lost their contributions to science and knowledge today would be diminished. We should realize that science and knowledge are often based on the observations and discoveries of our predecessors. If the knowledge of the past is not transmitted to us, we have to start from the beginning. Today's scientists depend heavily on the research and findings of previous scientists. Therefore the West owes a great part of its advancement to the Muslims who preserved the knowledge of the past.

Under the Abbaside rule, medical schools developed and physicians had to pass state examinations in order to practice medicine. In the year 931, 860 doctors were registered in Baghdad. Traveling groups of Doctors visited the poor and those incarcerated in jails.

The Caliph Harun al-Rashid introduced hospitals in the Muslim world, an institution that came from the Persians. Pharmacists were examined and licensed and there the first schools of pharmacy and "drug stores" were established. Jabir Ibn Hayyan composed the first pharmacopoeia in the year 776. A pharmacopoeia is an encyclopedia of drugs, medicines and chemicals.

In the 9th century, Muslims studied Persian medicine and classified and described diseases and their causes and treatment. As Professor Fisher describes it, "Building on Greek and Persian sources, the galaxy of Muslim physicians pushed the frontiers of medicine forward. Their practice, monographs and compendiums demonstrated originality and ingenuity. The diversity and number of their works, translated into Latin and eventually printed, further established the place of Muslim physicians in the history of medical science. Evidence of their actual skill was attested by the eagerness with which the Crusaders sought the services of Muslim doctors."

Hunayn ibn Ishaq and his disciples in Bagdad made a couple of hundred translations of the works of the Greek physician and philosopher, Galen. Hunayn wrote scores of books in addition. He composed 'Ten Treatises on the Eye' the earliest known systematic textbook of ophthalmology (the study of diseases of the eye).

Ali ibn Isa of Bagdad and Ammar of Mosul wrote two books on ophthalmology which were translated into Latin and were the best textbooks on eye diseases until the 18th Century.

Abu al Kasim, known as Abulcasis, was a great surgeon of Cordova, Spain. His writings were translated into Latin and became the surgical manual at the medical schools in Europe, helping to lay the foundations of surgery in Europe. The celebrated French surgeon, Guy de Chauliac, was much influenced by him.

The Muslims were extremely interested in mathematics, and advanced the science considerably. They studied and translated Greek and Indian works on the subject. They adopted the widespread use of Arabic numerals and the zero. They also wrote the first book on Algebra. Another book by a Muslim author, "Calculation of Integration & Equation" was translated into Latin in the 12th century and used as a textbook in Europe for four centuries. The Muslims made algebra an exact science and refined geometry and plane and spherical trigonometry. These sciences were largely founded by the Arabs and passed through Spain and Sicily, where they greatly assisted European scientific advancement.

In astronomy, the Muslims were very active. One reason for the interest was the religious necessity to perform pilgrimage and locate the direction of Mecca for prayer and mosque construction. During Caliph al-Mansur's reign, Muslims translated Greek, Persian and Indian works on astronomy and astrology. Many observatories were built. Some believed the earth was round. Professor Hitti notes that the Muslims 'kept alive the

ancient doctrine of the sphericity of the earth, without which the discovery of the New world would not have been possible. An exponent of this doctrine was Abu Ubaydah Muslim al-Balansi (of Valencia) who flourished in the first half of the tenth century. (*History of the Arabs*). Dr. Hitti points out that Columbus believed the earth was shaped like a pear because of a Latin publication in 1410 describing the Muslim theory which was derived from the Hindus. If some Muslim scientists had not held to the theory of the earth being round, who knows how much longer it would have taken to discover this country?

Muslim astronomers calculated the earth's diameter and circumference. They constructed astronomical tables. Al Bairuni believed the earth rotated on its axis. He also calculated the latitudes and longitudes of all the main Middle Eastern cities. Umar al-Khayyam, poet, mathematician, and astronomer, developed a calendar with an error of only one day every 5,000 years. Al-Zarkali of Toledo invented the astrolabe, an instrument used to determine the locations of heavenly bodies. He wrote a book on the astrolabe and Copernicus was influenced by it.

The Arabic names of the stars and constellations and words such as azimuth, Nadir and Zenith show the Middle Eastern impact on astronomy.

Chemistry comes from the Arabic word al-chemia. Jabir Ibn Hayyan (Geber) of Kufah, during the 8th century, emphasized the need for experimentation. His works were translated into Latin in the 12th century and were the foundation of western chemistry. Again the Arabic origin of such words like alkali, alcohol, and antimony show the Muslim influence on the West.

Muslims contributed greatly in optics. Al-Hasan ibn al-Haytham (Alhazen) wrote "On Optics" in which he argued that the eye does not emit visual rays as Euclid and Ptolemy thought to be the case. His studies, translated into Latin, influenced Roger Bacon, Kepler and Leonardi da Vinci.

I will mention three giants of the Golden Age of Islam. One was al-kindi who was born in Kufah in the 9th century. He studied optics, chemistry, medicine, music and philosophy. He is considered the first Muslim philosopher of the Arabs. He wrote 265 books. Fifteen were on meteorology, several on specific weights, the tides, optics, light and music. His book introduced the science of optics to Europe.

Al-Razi was the chief of the Bagdad hospital in the 10th century. He has been considered the finest original mind and clinician of the Middle

Ages. He wrote 200 books, half of them in medicine.

His greatest work was and perhaps the most extensive medical work written by a medical man is his "Al-Hawi", i.e., comprehensive book, which included Greek, Syrian and early Arabic medical knowledge in their entirety. It was more than *twenty* volumes and for each disease cited all the Greek, Syrian, Arabic, Persian and Indian authors and then gave his own experiences. In 1279, it was translated into Latin and had a considerable influence on European medicine. The last edition of this work was in 1542.

Ibn Sina, also known as Avicenna, was born in 980, near Bukhara. He acquired an encyclopedic knowledge of medicine, mathematics, astronomy and philosophy, and strongly influenced Europe. He wrote "al-Kanun", a medical encyclopedia which included all the advances of Muslim knowledge. It replaced the works of Galen and al-Razi and was the chief medical book of the Middle East and Western Europe from the 12th to the 17th century, *five whole centuries*. Dr. Meyerhof states: "Probably no medical work ever written has been so much studied, and it is still in current use in the Orient." It is no wonder, Ibn Sina was known as "the Prince and Chief of Physicians."

We now have a better idea of the splendor of the Muslims of the past in the field of science and their contributions to modern Western science and technology. Now the question arises as to why these Muslims, spiritual and/or physical descendants of illiterate Arabs, became the transmitters and originators of scientific knowledge.

Immediately we should realize that the possession of Arabic was an advantage. Dr. G. Anawati in the Cambridge History of Islam notes that, "The admirable flexibility of the Arabic language made it possible for them to coin an exact philosophical and scientific vocabulary, capable of expressing the most complicated scientific and technical terms. On this subject it is rewarding to read the penetrating studies of Louis Massignon, who has shown how helpful the Arabic language is to the internal exploration of thought ("La Science Antique et Medievale") and for this reason it is particularly suitable for the expression of the exact sciences and for their development along the lines of the historical progress of mathematics.."

"From being enthusiastic and industrious disciples the Muslims proceeded to the second stage of becoming masters, enamoured of research and experiment, exploring not only the books of the ancients, but also nature itself. Islam was soon to produce original scientists in various

branches of study, such as astronomy, mathematics and medicine, who were the equals of the greatest known in history”.

However great Arabic was as a scientific language, it did not assist the Arabs in their scientific development until the time of the Holy Prophet Muhammad (peace and blessings of God be on him). The advent of Islam awakened the minds, bodies, and souls of the Arabs and initiated the Arab awakening. Acceptance of Christianity, at least, did not halt the decline and fall of the Roman Empire and the advent of the Dark Ages for Europe. Acceptance of Islam led to the rise and ascent of the Arabs and the Golden Ages of Islam.

The Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of God be on him) held knowledge in great esteem. Accordingly he said ‘Seeking knowledge is an obligation on every man and woman.’ (Ibn Majah). It is an obligation, a religious duty to seek knowledge and women as well as men are told to foster their mental development. He is even reported to have said “Seek knowledge from the cradle to the grave.” The young and old must educate themselves. Even those literally “in the cradle” are subject to educational processes. Many psychiatrists have claimed an adult’s personality is formed before the age of three. There is no doubt of the capacity of children to learn to speak, learn a language, learn how to sit up, stand, walk, grasp objects, open doors, etc., are acquired and built up during these very early years. The Holy Prophet (peace and blessing of God be on him) has wisely told us to surround children from birth with positive educational influences. He has also told us that the aged should learn. If you think you are too old to learn, you will not learn because you won’t make the effort.

How important is it to educate oneself ? Reportedly the Prophet said “The learned men of my people are comparable to the prophets of Israel” and “The ink of the scholars is more precious than the blood of the martyrs.”

Thus it is an important religious duty of all Muslims to develop their minds and the early Muslims heeded the Prophet’s words, as we have seen.

The Holy Prophet reportedly told us to “seek knowledge although it be in China,” and that “The word of wisdom is the lost property of the believer, so wherever he finds it, he has a better right to it”. The early Muslims followed these teachings of the Prophet. Some went even to China and brought back paper and gunpowder, among other things. They travelled extensively and sought knowledge wherever it was found.

The Prophet is reported to have said “Preserve knowledge through

writing'. Early Muslims did this and, as a result, the valuable heritage of ancient knowledge was preserved to the benefit of the modern world.

The Holy Qur'an was a great stimulus to intellectual advancement. The very first verses revealed to the Holy Prophet were: "Proclaim thou in the name of thy Lord Who created, created man from a clot of blood. Proclaim! And thy Lord is Most Generous. Who taught by the pen, taught man what he knew not! (96:2-6). It tells us that Allah has been generous to man by teaching him by the pen, by the books, that books were important in order to gain knowledge. These verses were revealed to a people who did not respect writing and to a person who could neither read nor write.

The Qur'an asks us 'Say, Are those who know equal to those who know not?' (39:10). It tells us 'You are the best people raised for the good of mankind.' (3:11). How can Muslims be a practical force for good if we refuse to educate ourselves in secular knowledge? How can we cure the sick, if we do not study medicine, how can we provide food to the masses without studying agriculture, how can we clothe and house mankind if we do not study textiles and construction?

The Qur'an describes men of understanding as 'those who remember Allah standing, sitting and lying on their sides, and ponder over the creation of the heavens and the earth...' (3:192) and "that Allah has pressed for you into service whatever is in the heavens and whatever is in the earth, and has completed His favors for you, both visible and the invisible." (31:21). We are told to ponder over the universe and that the universe has hidden as well as obvious benefits that man should seek.

The Qur'an states that Allah "is the First and the Last and the Manifest and the Hidden, and He knows all things full well." Allah is Aleem, i.e. Omniscient, All-Knowing. As Muslims we have the duty to take on the attributes of Allah as far as we are able to. As Allah is Beneficent and Merciful, Knowledgeable too, because Allah is All-Knowing and we should know as much as we can. In Islam ignorance certainly is not bliss.

These teachings of the Qur'an and commands of the Prophet led to the Golden Age Of Islam. Whoever follows them will reap the benefits of science and be himself a benefit to mankind. The Muslims of today are slowly awakening to their duty to seek knowledge, but we have so far to go. If Muslims really turn to the Qur'an and the teachings of the Prophet, we will once again benefit ourselves and the world as our ancestors once did.

Alhamdo Lillahe Rabbil Aalameen.

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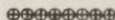
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